

NEWS

New York female poolees rise to new heights

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NEW YORK – The Armory Track and Field Center in Manhattan recently hosted Recruiting Station New York’s quarterly female delayed entry program pool function providing a unique environment for nurturing the mind, body and spirit of 40 future Marines.

The poolees from RS New York studied pictures of women athletes from the past, as Shelly Glover, a published author and running trainer, described the barriers these female athletes overcame nearly a century ago just for the right to run and compete alongside their male counterparts. Their images are displayed in the National Track Hall of Fame located in The Armory.

Glover provided a detailed and thorough class on proper training and nutrition. She stressed to the young women that they must take their training seriously in order to uphold and honor the legacy of the female athletes who preceded them.

“Do not let all that women have done before you, go in vain,” Glover said. “You must stay committed to your decision and take personal responsibility for preparing yourself. I believe in you, but more importantly, you must believe in yourself.”

Her nutrition class focused on diet, stretching, and a progressive approach to running and preparing for the rigors of recruit training.

Female recruits, while making up the smallest percentage of recruits on Parris Island, have the

highest attrition rate, mainly due to lower leg injuries and stress fractures, according to Maj. J. J. Dill, RS New York’s commanding officer.

Recruiting Station New York has tackled the problem of female attrition by focusing on the proper nutritional, physical and mental preparation of each female poolee prior to shipping. The success of New York’s program has resulted in only one female being discharged from Parris Island so far this fiscal year out of the 38 who have shipped.

Having a quarterly pool function exclusively for females in an environment such as The Armory, coupled with the experience and knowledge of Glover, allowed the poolees of RS New York to establish a foundation of physical preparedness upon which their future success will be built. Physical training was not the only objective for that day, however ... mental preparation for recruit training was also an objective.

“The female mentoring day is an important piece in the training and development of young women who are preparing for recruit training,” Dill said. “We not only want to ensure their physical training is progressing, but we want to provide them with positive role models that

they can emulate and use for motivation when they need it most.”

After Glover’s class, Staff Sgt. Tama Richardson, a 4th RTBn. drill instructor, gave the poolees a glimpse of what their life will be like for the 12 weeks they spend as recruits on Parris Island. Her participation in the training took away some of the poolees’ fears and anxieties of what their drill instructors will be like, but at the same time, she let them know that drill instructors are all business.

Richardson gave basic instruction on how to properly address Marines, stand at attention, move with a sense of urgency, and sound off. She put the future Marines through an Initial Strength Test that gauges their physical preparedness for recruit training.

The last event of the day, and perhaps the most important, was a group discussion involving current and former females Marines and the young poolees. The female mentoring session provides a venue for Marines to discuss with poolees the challenges they have overcome and the growth they have experienced as United States Marines.

Also participating in this event were two Marines from RS New York, Capt. Christine Rabaja, 1st Marine Corps District quality control officer, and Clarice Joynes, a former Marine who is now the director of the New York City Office of Veterans Affairs.

Joynes spoke of her experience at Parris Island 23 years ago and how the Marine Corps has come a long way. She emphasized the point that regardless of jobs available to females in the Corps, the demands of becoming a Marine have not changed.

“The honor, courage and commitment have not changed,” said Joynes. “It requires sacrifice, but it will give you the confidence, pride and self-reliance you will use for the rest of your life,” she said.

As the first female in her billet for the mayor of New York City, she attributed her success and foundation to the Marine Corps.

Providing closing remarks, Rabaja, who was deployed in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, evidenced all Glover spoke of earlier regarding opportunities for, and the accomplishments of, women. As she spoke of challenges and fears she had to overcome, the female poolees’ eyes widened with wonder, excitement and anticipation.

By the end of the day, there were no posed questions left unanswered.

The event tied together all aspects affecting their decisions to join. The females left more confident and self-assured regarding the commitment they have made to the Marine Corps and their country.

Former airman acknowledges Marine Corps’ uniqueness

JOE HAMILTON
SPECIAL TO THE BOOT

There have always been good-natured rivalries among the military services, with the Marine Corps bearing the brunt of it all. Whenever I mentioned that I had served in the United States Air Force, a typical response from a Marine goes like this, “Well, everyone can’t be one of the best,” or “The Air Force was created to transport Marines to places too far for them to hump.”

Now we have our barbs to throw at the Marines also, one goes like this, “I wanted to join the Marines but my IQ was too high, the hearer then ask, “What’s your IQ,” to which the speaker replies with an emphatic answer of “one.”

Although I have had laughs at the expense of Marines, there have been a few times that I am appreciative of the “Few and the Proud”.

While stationed at Utapao, Thailand, in South East Asia, I was tasked with perimeter security and beyond the fence line we had a security-dog team. Beyond them, somewhere in the bushes, we had the Devil Dogs.

At the end of the graveyard shift, a deuce-and-a-half would rumble up and our fresh relief would hop out. After an exchange of pass-

words and other niceties, we would come in and go straight to chow. The mess hall was fairly clean and we would eat a good breakfast before hitting the rack.

Well, the Marines did their relief somewhat differently. First they would ‘ruck-up’, then hump into the bush to linkup with their relief at some prearranged coordinate on a map. Then do whatever Marines do, and then hump back to base camp.

I saw the Marines in our mess hall only once. They did not sit with us. They did not exchange glances with us, and they did not check-in their weapons. Whenever one of the Marines went for seconds, he did not ask the others to watch his weapon. Instead, he kept it in his very presence the entire time.

I thought that amazing, since we were required to check our weapons. Anyway, they did not eat with casualness as we did; in fact, they ate their food as if they were still on guard duty.

Once they had finished, they mustered, and as a fog, drifted out and were gone.

One could feel a concerted sigh of relief, and although there was small talk afterwards, we all knew we had been in the presence of some awesome

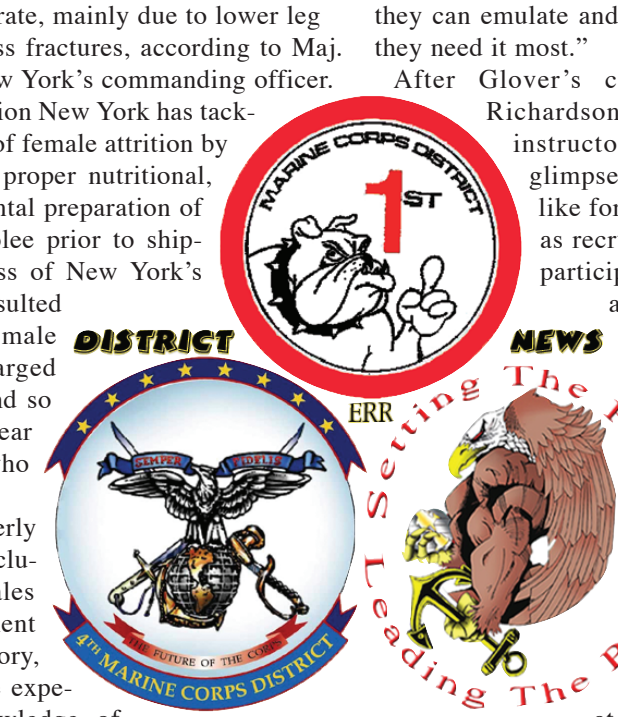
Americans.

Another time that I’ll always remember is while reading the Washington Post on line, I happened upon a photo of a Marine engaged in a firefight with insurgents in Iraq. The Marine was driving a HMMWV with several bullet holes in the windshield.

I read where he had just driven directly into enemy fire to pull out about seven other Marines who were pinned down. While watching CNN before returning from Myrtle Beach this past week, I saw an interview with his widow and 7-year-old son who had just received a birthday card from his Marine dad, now killed in action.

I suppose we’ll always have good-natured rivalries among the service branches, and I’ll probably laugh at a few of the jokes, but when it comes to the Marines, I may laugh but in my heart of heart, I’ll say a short prayer for those who have come to join the ranks of our country’s best, and who we know as Marines.

They have Always been, and will Always be, Faithful to the lifestyle we have come to enjoy in this great land. This former “fly-boy” says, Thanks Marines for all you do!



Attention Women Softball Teams

The Women's Softball League will be starting play June 11. There will be a mandatory coaches meeting May 25 at 4 p.m. at the Parris Island Fitness Center. All eligible patrons are able to participate and each team is allowed four civilian players. For more information, Jeff Epstein can be contacted at 228-1542 or e-mailed at epsteinj@usmc-mccs.org.